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ABSTRACT

This report summarizes a doctoral dissertation that attempted to determine the criteria used by school districts in selecting administrative personnel other than superintendents at the district office level. Data were gathered through questionnaires mailed to all superintendents of school districts with more than 10,000 students in eight Rocky Mountain states. Respondents were asked to rank in order of preference 11 administrative selection criteria that had been gleaned from the literature. These rankings were (1) professional competence, (2) progressional leadership, (3) human relations, (4) personal motivational characteristics, (5) intelligence, (6) professional training and experience, (7) recommendations, (8) philosophy of education, (9) physical characteristics, (10) social-economic characteristics, and (11) personal data. The author concludes that professional attributes are considered more important in the selection process than personal characteristics, and he suggests that the study findings be used to develop an operational model for the selection of district office administrative personnel. (JG)

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CRITERIA UTILIZED IN SELECTION OF DISTRICT OFFICE ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL

A Summary of a Doctoral Dissertation by James L. Rassi

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FORWARD

This study is the first issue of Research Reports on Educational Administration in this its sixth volume year. First published in 1971, R.R.E.A. has brought current and concise research to the desks of Arizona school administrators. The current issue is the twenty-sixth in the continuing series.

Each year, topics which would be of greatest current interest to administrators in Arizona are identified from among the doctoral dissertations produced by the Department of Educational Administration and Supervision at Arizona State University. These topics are then summarized and appear in Research Reports on Educational Administration. The issues are distributed to administrators throughout the state of Arizona.

A list of titles in this series which are available from the Bureau of Educational Research and Services is included on the inside back cover. They are also available in microform from Xerox University Microfilm, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 48106.

The current study, by James L. Rassi, attempted to determine the criteria used by school districts in selecting administrative personnel, other than superintendents, at the district office operational level. The increasing complexities and dynamic growth of the educational enterprise demand the selection and training of increasingly competent administrators. Dr. Rassi's research constituted an attempt to identify and describe the attitudinal characteristics of superintendents and/or responding administrators as they relate to the selection of district administrative personnel.

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INTRODUCTION

The need for sound and systematic procedures by which administrative personnel are examined and appointed has been discussed for decades (Elsbree and Reuter, 1954; Fensch and Wilson, 1964; Knezevich, 1971). The emphasis seems to have been on the selection of classroom teachers, yet, to quote from Elsbree and Reuter,

> unless school districts can attract superior individuals in administration, the output, in view of the complicated nature of the task, will be considerably less than the situation demands. It takes leadership at the top to create or release leadership in the ranks.

Dr. Rassi's project attempted to contribute to a higher level of professionalism in administrative selection and more specifically, to communicate the established criteria for administrative selection to those people responsible for doing the actual identification, training and selection.

THE PROBLEM

Essentially, this study was an inquiry into a decision-making process involving administrative personnel selection. The specific problem which was addressed was the determination of criteria used by school districts in selecting administrative personnel other than superintendents at the district office operational level.

Two questions were posed in an attempt to solve this problem. They were:

1) What criteria are utilized by school districts in the administrative selection process?

2) What are the areas of consensus that involve the criteria identified by responding administrators in this study?

PROCEDURES

The descriptive survey research design was employed in this study. During the summer of 1974, all superintendents of school districts with more than 10,000 students in the Mountain States region received a questionnaire. This was an N of 91 school districts in eight states.

The questionnaire included general demographic information and a series of eleven criteria statements, divided into two categories - personal and professional. These criteria were gleaned from the literature and reviewed by a series of panels, the purpose of which was to test their validity. Included was a group of placement directors representing seven states, and an advanced graduate class in personnel administration.

Respondents were requested to rank the eleven criteria according to order of preference, without repeating ranks. Data obtained from the ranking procedure were analyzed by the Friedman test and chi square rank for analysis of variance between and among groups. These statistics were used to assist in determining whether or not there was any difference between groups in regard to the importance of the administrative selection criteria. Agreement on rank differences was determined by application of Kendall's coefficient of concordance.

FINDINGS

Seventy-eight school districts of the possible 91 total population in the eight state region replied to the questionnaire of this study. This represented an 85.7 percent return.

In addition to the demographic information which was summarized, the major findings of this project took the form of the summarized rankings assigned to the eleven selection criteria. Those rankings were:

1) Professional Competence
2) Professional Leadership
3) Human Relations
4) Personal Motivational Characteristics
5) Intelligence
6) Professional Training and Experience - Academic and Field
7) Recommendations
8) Philosophy of Education
9) Physical Characteristics
10) Social - Economic Characteristics
11) Personal Data

Kendall's coefficient of concordance (W) was employed to explore the level of agreement between and among school districts in relation to their preferences for all eleven of the selection criteria. An overall $\underline{W}$ of .80 was determined. (1.00 represents total agreement) This finding proved to be significant at the .01 level when checked by the Fisher and Yates' Table of Critical Values of Chi Square.

CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions were based upon the findings of the statistical analysis of data gathered from the responding administrators' school districts.

1) The selection process encompasses two major areas of criteria: (1) personal characteristics and (2) professional qualifications.

2) The top three ranking criteria constituted professional attributes and were considered most important in the selection process.

3) The significant rank order relationship of criteria found in this study can be the basis for developing a guide (operational model) to be used in the selection of district office administrative personnel.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations which follow were based on the research findings and conclusions drawn from those findings as presented in this study.

1) It is recommended that careful job analyses (job descriptions) be developed to include personal characteristics and professional qualifications in selection programs.

2) It is recommended that the eleven selection criteria of this study be expanded and refined to include more specific operational definitions for use in constructing a check list.

3) It is recommended that evidence be obtained to validate the selection decisions of superintendents and/or responding administrators with successful or unsuccessful performance in the field.

4) It is recommended that in the development of a selection guide or operational model, consideration be given to the situational context of the school district.

IMPLICATIONS

Well defined assessment methods are used with apparent effectiveness to fill subordinate positions, yet scientific tests and rating scales for identifying administrative potential and practice are not well developed. There is need for the selection of increasingly competent administrators by means of a systematic and valid identification process.

Such a process must give priority status to professional competence criteria. Professional competence, leadership and human relations skills are among those attributes which must be given highest consideration in the selection process. Personal attributes such as motivational characteristics and intelligence must also be seriously considered.

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